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Ready, set, surf!

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Ready, set, surf!

I've set up my hardware and software — or — I'm at a public access point. I'm ready.

Here's where you get connected and have some fun.

Surfing the Web

Want to look for a new career, research your family tree or learn how to quit smoking? You're already halfway there.

1. Dial into the source. To connect to the Internet, you have two choices: you can tell your computer to dial into your ISP or you can run your browser, which will automatically dial in for you. If you're at a public access point, the system is probably already connected.

2. Once your connection is established and your browser is ready, type the following into the location bar at the top, then hit the Enter key:

<http://www.connect.gc.ca>

This is the World Wide Web address that takes you to the Connecting Canadians site, where you'll find more information describing the effort we're making to get Canadians on-line, lots of links to useful sites and success stories about Canadians who have become connected.

What you've just done is actually quite complex. You've told your computer to find the Connecting Canadians site by typing an address or Universal Resource Locator (URL): **<http://www.connect.gc.ca>**. Like your home's address, each Web site has its own URL. When you type the complete address of the site you want to visit, your browser will take you there.

3. Once a Web page has loaded, explore it with your mouse. To activate links, click on pictures or underlined text. These will take you to related Web pages.

There are World Wide Web sites for everyone. Web sites are created by individuals, corporations, governments and organizations. Remember that Web sites are not permanent. They change, evolve and some may eventually disappear.

Is there more?

When you're comfortable browsing the Web, think of one interesting topic (skiing, gardening, renovating, celebrities) and try searching for information on it. Many different search engines are available to you. Your browser has a Search button or menu item to get you started. Click on it. A Web site will load that feature, a variety of topics and a blank bar. Click on the bar and type a few words that best describe your topic. Typing "cosmos" might bring up a listing of sites about the universe, outer space, maybe even a video of the last shuttle launch!



What about parental discretion?

Since the Internet is such a big place with nearly no boundaries to expression and tastes, there is the inevitable concern of adult and explicit material. Obviously, this material is inappropriate for young surfers, so the Internet community has taken it upon itself to furnish the Net with certain safeguards. There are also software companies that have created filtering programs for your own computer that make the Net safer for children (e.g. Cyber Patrol, Cybersitter, Kinderguard, SurfWatch and Net Nanny, just to name a few). Each application uses slightly different methods to block obscene or explicit material, and none of them is infallible. Though these provisions are rigorously employed,

there is the possibility that some explicit material could be accessed. **That is why we caution parents to supervise their children's use of the Internet, to avoid exposure to this kind of material.**

There's no end to what you can do on-line

The actual list is endless, but here's an idea of some of the different kinds of things you can do on the Internet:

- ✎ find phone numbers for out-of-towners
- ✎ do your banking — most major financial institutions offer this service
- ✎ find postal codes
- ✎ buy products from on-line catalogues
- ✎ keep up with current events (many newspapers are on-line)
- ✎ browse through back issues of favourite magazines
- ✎ research term papers
- ✎ download pictures from Web sites
- ✎ visit famous museums and art galleries
- ✎ take a course
- ✎ play games — or learn math — with cartoon characters or puppets
- ✎ read up on new medical treatments
- ✎ pick up recipes for free
- ✎ keep in daily touch with friends or family far away
- ✎ buy tickets to the theatre or a hockey game
- ✎ keep track of late-breaking news
- ✎ keep track of sports scores the moment they change
- ✎ plan and book your next vacation
- ✎ check stock market figures
- ✎ pick up trivia about your favourite stars
- ✎ look up the lyrics to an old song
- ✎ download software programs.

About E-mail

Whether you use the E-mail function in your browser or a separate E-mail program, sending and receiving electronic messages is fun and easy. You'll need the E-mail address of the person who will receive your correspondence and your own E-mail address.

Your ISP probably established an E-mail account for you as part of their services. Your name, or a name you've chosen, plus the ISP's address will likely be your E-mail address. Ask to be sure. Your E-mail address should look something like this:

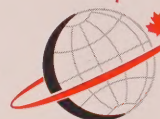
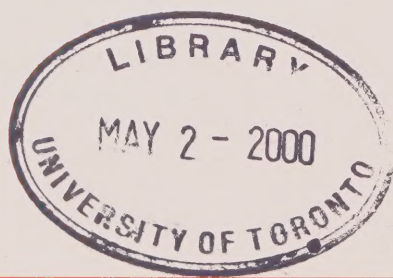
dora@isp.com

When sending a message, enter the recipient's E-mail address in the To box. If you've set up the software correctly, your E-mail address should appear in the From box. Type your message in the main message area and hit the Send button. That's all there is to it.

Where do I go from here?

Now that you have your computer set up or have found a local public access point, and have learned how to send E-mail and browse the World Wide Web, you'll find that there's much more on the Internet to discover. There's a wide selection of books and software to guide you, and all public access points are staffed and waiting to help.

Welcome to the ranks of connected Canadians!





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